



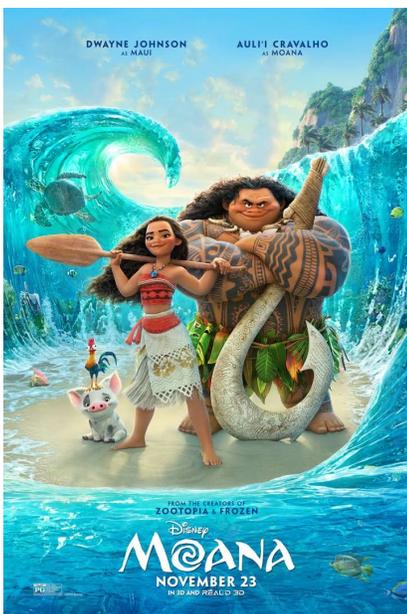
nurture.
inspire.
empower.

MOANA MOVIE REVIEW

BY ELLEN SINGER, C.A.S.E. SENIOR THERAPIST, LCSW-C

This latest Disney movie has received rave reviews by both fans and critics. I would suggest to all parents that they view sites like www.fandango.com and www.common sense media.org for more information about this movie. I've written this brief movie review especially to warn parents about one particular

aspect of the movie that is potentially quite upsetting for foster and adopted children.



One of the lead characters, Maui, is a demi-god, who shares his life story with Moana. Paraphrasing some, he states that his “human parents took one look at me and decided they didn’t want me and tossed me into the water (the sea) like I was nothing.” Maui has tattoos all over his body and one picture shows a person tossing a baby into the sea. He was saved by “the gods” and given the power to be a demi-god. With that power, he strives to give humans wonderful gifts. Moana notes, “You did everything for them so they’d love you?” Maui replies: “It was never enough.”

Fortunately, Moana makes two important points in response to Maui’s story: 1) The gods saved Maui because he was worthy – of being saved (that he was NOT nothing) – 2) The gods are not responsible for Maui’s desire to do good things – he is – meaning he is good. However, the

movie also shows Maui’s internal struggle with doing the right thing and helping Moana versus being disillusioned with himself and “others”, and choosing to look out only for himself and run from danger. Of course, Maui does the right thing in the end and risks his life and his power to help Moana.

While Maui’s back story is a very small part of the movie, it obviously can have big triggers for foster and adopted children. As I suggest in all of my movie reviews, parents will need to decide if they believe their child will be alarmed by some of the themes presented in the movie, or whether viewing the movie would provide a good opportunity for parent-child dialogue about adoption. At the very least, parents are urged to prepare any foster or adopted child or teen or adult! – no matter what age – about this aspect of the movie.